



US Army Corps
of Engineers
New Orleans District

Media Advisory

Public Affairs Office, 7400 Leake Avenue
<http://www.mvn.usace.army.mil/>

Tel. 504-862-2201
Fax 504-862-1724

July 2, 2008

Milestone articulated concrete mat cast in St. Francisville

What: The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Mat Casting Yard will cast its 11,000,000 mat this month.

The 210-acre facility in St. Francisville is owned and operated by the Corps for the sole purpose of casting articulated concrete mats (ACM), used to prevent the river banks from scouring and offer the first line of defense to reducing damage on the river levees from the constant attack from the mighty Mississippi.

Where: The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Mat Casting Yard located on the left descending bank of the Mississippi River at mile 265.5, just outside of St. Francisville, La.

When: 11:00 a.m., Thursday, July 10, 2008

Planning to attend? Please call 504-862-2201 to schedule an interview and/or site visit.
All visitors must bring their own hard hats and wear closed-toe shoes and long pants.

Background: Since 1885, Army engineers have been protecting the Mississippi River banks and levees with some type of revetment. The first engineers used fish pole mats followed by Willow tree framed mats, board mats, concrete block and today's standard articulated concrete mats. Many of the original fish pole and Willow mat can still be found and seen on high resolution surveys of the bottom of the river. Articulated concrete mats are 3 inches thick, 4 feet wide and 25 feet long and have been used since 1948.

The St. Francisville casting yard is one of the three remaining casting fields found on the Mississippi River. During the 1970s and 1980s, there were five casting yards or fields found on the river, however, as a result of the construction program nearing completion, only three yards remain.

Operating under annual contracts, the St. Francisville Casting Yard has been used to cast mats since 1961 and provides revetment for the lower 325 miles of the Mississippi River and the upper 55 miles of the Atchafalaya River. After the Mississippi River flood of 1983, the casting field reached it highest production rate of 450,000 mats, but under the current contract the yard only produces between 70,000 and 80,000 mats per year.